

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 890

By Beavers

A RESOLUTION to encourage women, age forty and over, to have an annual mammogram.

WHEREAS, early screenings for breast cancer routinely save lives and increase the survival rate for affected women. Though current standards for breast cancer screening are considered adequate by many health care advocacy groups, such as the American Cancer Society and the American College of Radiology, these groups continue to encourage even greater detection standards; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force, an agent of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, recently issued a new set of guidelines concerning the standards and frequency of breast cancer screenings. The Task Force cited cost concerns associated with preventative healthcare and psychological damage from improper diagnosis; treating women who did not necessarily have malignant growths was also a major concern; and

WHEREAS, the value of saving lives by early screening, however, far outweighs any associated psychological or economic losses. Many doctors and researchers worry about the lives that will be lost due to the absence of early testing and a growing fear focuses around the concept that many women will see the new federal recommendations as an opening to avoid an invasive and unpopular procedure; and

WHEREAS, Breast Cancer organizations warn against the new recommendations, providing a clear conscience for those who prefer to skip the testing; the American Cancer Society, the American College of Radiology, and other experts condemned the change, saying the benefits of routine mammography have been clearly demonstrated and play a key role in reducing the number of mastectomies and the death toll from one of the most common cancers; and

WHEREAS, another frightening factor surrounding the Task Force's recommendation is the possible institution of the new federal standards as the guidelines for insurance companies' coverage of breast cancer screening; and

WHEREAS, the American Cancer Society recommends that women age forty and over should have a screening mammogram every year and should keep on doing so for as long as they are in good health; and

WHEREAS, the American Cancer Society also recommends that women in their twenties and thirties should have a clinical breast exam as part of a regular exam by a health expert at least every three years. After age forty, women should have a breast exam by a health expert every year; and

WHEREAS, the American Cancer Society recommends breast self-exams as an option for women in their twenties who should consult a health professional to verify technique and correct methods. Such young women should also be told about the benefits and limitations of such a self-exam, reporting any changes in how their breasts look and feel to a health expert right away; and

WHEREAS, the current standards, which are presently advocated and approved by the American Cancer Society, should be the recommended standards of any authoritative health services department at the federal, state, or local level; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that the State of Tennessee supports the current standards promoted by the American Cancer Society, and urges against the federal government discouraging early screening in women, a practice that has saved thousands of lives and decreased the stigma associated with screening and early cancer prevention.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.